

Purpose of Representation

The purpose of this representation is to ensure the scheme is designed and implemented in a manner sympathetic to existing land uses, particularly the Estate's ongoing commercial farming and shooting operations. We also highlight concerns with the engagement process and the potential environmental and operational impacts of the proposals.

Key Concerns

1. Environmental Impacts - We are particularly concerned about the effect on local listed buildings and their settings. The mitigation measures proposed to date appear insufficient to fully address potential harm.
2. Compulsory Acquisition of Land - The extent of compulsory acquisition proposed is considered unnecessary and will have a significant adverse impact on the Estate's commercial shoot operations.
3. Design Issues - There is no clear justification provided for the decision not to use underground cabling, which could reduce surface impacts. Additionally, safety concerns arise regarding machinery working near overhead cables.
4. Construction Impacts - The construction phase is expected to have a massive impact on the small rural roads around Fairstead, causing disruption, safety issues, and inconvenience to local residents and businesses.
5. Stakeholder Engagement - Engagement to date has been very poor. Notifications have been late, information insufficient or inaccurate, and responses to submitted concerns have not been forthcoming. This has caused unnecessary stress and uncertainty.
6. Soil and Drainage - We are concerned about the long-term impacts on soil quality and drainage, particularly in haul road areas. There is insufficient detail about how soil compaction and drainage disruption will be mitigated or remediated.

Engagement

The Estate, together with its agent, has engaged extensively with National Grid and Fisher German.

A formal response was submitted on 29th July 2025 during the Landowner Consultation, following an extension due to initially incorrect mapping, as well as an additional submission on 26th February 2026.

To date, we have not received any substantive response to this submission.

The plans provided during consultation were often incorrect and of low resolution, hampering meaningful review and causing significant time and stress.

The late notification of additional land required for an attenuation pond is a further example of inadequate consultation.

Impact on the Estate

1. Farming Operations - The proposals will cause significant disruption during construction, with potential long-term impacts on farming productivity, including risks of soil compaction and reduced yields.
2. Soil and Drainage - Existing drainage systems must be maintained intact, as per drainage plans provided by the Estate. We seek assurance that land disturbed will be fully restored.
3. Cable Depth - We request a minimum soil cover of 1.2 metres above cables to protect agricultural machinery and land use.
4. Construction Management - Managing the farm during construction will require significant additional time and resources for access coordination, supervision, and ongoing operational adjustments.

Compulsory Acquisition and Heads of Terms

We are not yet in a position to negotiate Heads of Terms, pending further instruction from our agent.

It is critical that the extent of land acquisition is fully justified and minimised.

A properly designed scheme is essential to reduce impacts on the Estate.

Environmental and Landscape Considerations

The development will result in disruption to landscape character and farming practices. This representation aims to ensure impacts are minimised and appropriately mitigated.

Pylon Locations

- TB116 should be repositioned as far east as possible toward the hedged boundary to reduce farming impacts.
- TB117 should be at least 40 metres from the southern field boundary to allow machinery access.

Permanent Access Routes (Plan 1275)

We request permanent access routes follow existing field boundaries rather than cross through fields.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Woodland identified for BNG within Plan 1275 must be removed from Order Limits, as it is not available for sale and is integral to the Estate's commercial shooting operations.

Solar DCO Interaction

The land is subject to an approved DCO for Longfield Solar Farm, with existing third-party rights. Early coordination between National Grid, the Solar Farm, and the Estate is essential to minimise conflict.

Shooting and Farming Operations

Two key shooting drives will be affected, potentially making the shoot unviable during construction. We request National Grid works with the Estate to avoid shooting seasons and minimise farming disruption. Failure to do so may lead to financial losses and compensation claims.

Final Note

The cumulative burden of the process so far — including poor engagement and unaddressed consultation points — has caused considerable stress and operational challenges. We request that these concerns be fully taken into account in the examination.